

Executive Summary

Like many volunteer led activities and organisations, lack of time and capacity is a constant challenge for Woodcraft Folk. Working with a number of local districts around England, this research identified a series of key recommendations for the local districts and the organisation as a whole to enhance volunteer recruitment. Increasing the number of volunteers in local groups and districts will inevitably take some of the burden from the existing volunteers and introduce new skills and knowledge into the day to day operations of the groups. There was recognition amongst all involved in the research that recruiting new volunteers was important.

Woodcraft Folk works very well to engage and inspire generations of young people and Change Agents UK have seen this excellent work at first hand. Research agents noted the enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteers and the amazingly talented young people the organisation works with. However this research programme has identified a number of areas for improvement where the organisation may want to allocate resources to volunteer recruitment, particularly to fulfil its strategic aim of becoming “bigger and better”. Below is a series of recommendations, for local groups and for the wider Woodcraft Folk network to consider for future attention. These are based on the feedback from groups, the results of the research and/or feedback from the researchers themselves.

Recommended action	Woodcraft Folk nationally	Local districts and groups
Volunteer recruitment adverts	Provide standard templates	Regularly update adverts locally
Volunteer recruitment language	Provide “recommended language”	Consider local context
Targeting those keen to learn		Target locally to potential volunteers
The volunteer journey	Provide standard induction material	Ensure new volunteers have access to a “volunteer journey”
Knowledge and skills audit to inform recruitment processes	Provide templates for skills audit	Undertake skills audit for existing volunteers
Mass marketing/Profile raising	National press coverage	Local press coverage
Look within for help		Using District Fellows for online and social networking
Reinforcing the role of Volunteer coordinator	Training for volunteer coordinators	Allocate volunteer coordinator role
Refresh and reinforce material available through Folk Office	Regular review, refresh and reinforcement of material for volunteers	
Running adverts in parallel with other activity		Consider combining activity such as recruitment push with attending local events
Guidance and support for online presence including national website	Make better use of local profiles on national website	Ensure website is up to date and social networking opportunities are taken
Rota system for volunteers		Local rotas are established, particularly for occasional volunteers
Communication between groups	Facilitate best practice and information sharing	Share good practice with neighbouring groups and districts

Further detail on recommendations can be found in Section 7 of the full report.